

Listening to the Heart of Grace

for my soon-to-be-born granddaughter

In the hallways of darkness
we'll burn the midnight
oil until dawn, listening
to our own echoes stitched
across the landscape: sonorous sounds
sewn into the bare branches of the evening
sky. It will be the time
when moths drink from the tears
of sleeping birds and drums
call out an unfamiliar rhythm.
It will be the time when Grace is delivered.

Listen now. Can you hear
the missing beat of that heart's
lost chamber? In this house
with three rooms and everything
blue, where the nonexistent is known
only by an absence of footfall, do you hear
the small birds roosting in the rafters?

In a lone lower room, bluebirds
beat their wings against the chamber
walls, take flight with cardinals
on breathless rounds. Only bluebirds
return through the attic window,
and begin again their tiny dreams
of scarlet cathedrals filled with air,
of a frantic descent down an attic stair.

Listen. Something blue is beating
in the heart of Grace. Something
like distant drums. Something with wings.

Vernon Fowlkes Jr
Mobile, Alabama
vernon@vernonfowlkes.net

Poetry and Medicine Section Editor: Charlene Breedlove, Associate Editor. Poems may be submitted to jamapoems@jama-archives.org.

(Reprinted) JAMA, May 5, 2010—Vol 303, No. 17 1675

©2010 American Medical Association. All rights reserved.

Author in the Room®

Translating research
into practice
from JAMA and IHI

Will This Patient Develop Persistent Disabling Low Back Pain?

Roger Chou, MD

May 19, 2010
2 to 3 PM ET

Discuss the clinical
implications of research
results with the author at
the next teleconference.

Sign up at
www.ihl.org/authorintheroom

Can't attend the conference?

Submit your questions to
replies@jama-archives.org

Listen to past conferences or
subscribe to the Podcast at
jama.com/authorintheroom/authorindex.dtl

